

Remarks/Arguments***Claim Summary***

By this Amendment, claims 17-21, 25-32 and 36-38 have been revised.

Claims 17-38 remain pending in the application.

Examiner Interview

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesy of granting an interview with the undersigned. The interview was held at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on December 2, 2008, and was attended by Supervisory Patent Examiner Mikhail Kornakov, Patent Examiner Francis Smith, and the undersigned. An Interview Summary is of record in the application.

35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 17-38¹ were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Iwamoto (JP 2001-232289) in view of Michiaki et al. (JP 2001-248645). Claims 23-24 and 34-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Iwamoto and Michiaki et al., in view of Jefferson et al. (US 6056822). Claims 25-26 and 36-37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Iwamoto and Michiaki et al., in view of Fujimoto et al. (US 2001/0025890). Claims 27 and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Iwamoto and Michiaki et al., in view of Isayama et al. (US 4050078).

Applicants respectfully traverse each of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103 with respect to the now-pending claims.

As explained in the interview, none of the references of record teach the utilization of a suction device to draw excess oil repellent from a bearing component. For example, while the Fujimoto et al. reference relied on in the rejections teaches the inclusion of a suction pump (66) in a solution supply system, the pump 66 clearly does not suction a workpiece (wafer) to remove excess

¹ As discussed in the interview, the inclusion of all of claims 17-38 in the first rejection under §103 appears to be in error.

solution from the workpiece. Rather, the pump 66 is utilized to draw solution from a drain tank and supply the same to resist nozzle. See FIG. 6, and paragraphs [0065], [0066] and [0069] of Fujimoto et al.

By this Amendment, independent claim 17 has been revised in a manner consistent with the discussions held in the Examiner Interview. More particularly, claim 17 now recites that "*suctioning the predetermined area of said bearing component to remove excess oil repellent from the predetermined area.*"

Likewise, independent claim 28 now recites "*suctioning excess oil repellent from the predetermined area of said component using the removal member of the oil repellent removal apparatus.*"

As noted above, none of the references of record teach the utilization of a suction device to draw excess oil repellent from a bearing component as recited in amended claims 17 and 28.

Thus, for *at least* the reasons stated above, and the reasons expressed in the Examiner Interview, Applicants respectfully contend that independent claims 17 and 28, and the claims dependent thereon, define over the teachings of the prior art.

Conclusion

No other issues remaining, reconsideration and favorable action upon the claims 17-38 now pending in the application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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